

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SANTIA 07195 252350Z

67

ACTION SCS-03

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARA-06 SSO-00 OPR-01 /011 W

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O 252258Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1183

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 7195

STADIS/LIMDIS//////////

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, CI

SUBJECT: GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE - REVIEW OF CONSULAR
PROTECTION OF US CITIZENS DURING CRISIS

REF: STATE 243332

1. GAO TEAM ACCOMPANIED BY GAO ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR LOUIS W. HUNTER CALLED ON AMBASSADOR NOV 25, AT OUTSET ITS INVESTIGATION OF EMBASSY'S DISCHARGE OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO PROTECT US CITIZENS DURING SEP 1973 COUP IN CHILE. WHILE EMBASSY ANTICIPATES THAT IT CAN SATISFY TEAM'S REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION REGARDING SPECIFIC PROTECTION PROBLEMS, WE FORSEE TWO AREAS IN WHICH DIFFICULTIES LIKELY TO ARISE.

2. FIRST AREA HAS TO DO WITH SCOPE OF INFORMATION AND FILES TO BE AFFORDED TO TEAM. TEAM DIRECTOR PLUNKETT OPENED BY STATING THAT IN ORDER TO ASSESS ADEQUACY OF PROTECTION FUNCTION IT WAS NECESSARY TO HAVE ACCESS TO EMBASSY'S POLITICAL REPORTING, INCLUDING RESTRICTIVE DISTRIBUTION CAPTION TRAFFIC, IN CONNECTION WITH COUP AND PARTICULARLY WITH REGARD TO RESUMPTION OF FULL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS, WHICH TOOK PLACE SEPT 25, 1973. WE NOTED THAT MUCH OF THIS MATERIAL WAS SENSITIVE; SUGGESTED DEPT WAS BETTER ABLE TO DETERMINE PRECISELY WHAT SHOULD AND SHOULD NOT BE MADE AVAILABLE; AND DEFERRED FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THIS SUBJECT UNTIL TEAM PRODUCES A CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 02 SANTIA 07195 252350Z

CLEARER INDICATION OF WHAT EXACTLY IT WANTS TO SEE,

AND WHY. WE SUGGESTED THAT MANY OF TEAM'S NEEDS
MIGHT BE MET IN COURSE OF ITS DISCUSSIONS WITH OFFICERS
WHO WERE ON THE SCENE IN SEPT 1973.

3. SECOND PROBLEM HAS TO DO WITH SCOPE OF TEAM'S
CONTACTS. WHILE TEAM INDICATED IT DID NOT WISH TO
DISCUSS ITS MISSION WITH ANY CHILEANS, IT EXPRESSED
DESIRE TO INTERVIEW OFFICIALS IN SIX FOREIGN EMBASSIES
(SWEDEN, NETHERLANDS, BELGIUM, MEXICO, FRANCE, VENEZUELA)
AND ECLA -- LATTER PRESUMABLY BECAUSE OF ITS CHARTER FLIGHT
FOR UN-SPONSORED PERSONNEL. PURPOSE WOULD BE TO GAIN PERSPECTIVE
THROUGH COMPARISON OF STEPS TAKEN BY THOSE EMBASSIES TO PROTECT THEIR
RESPECTIVE NATIONALS, AS COMPARED TO US EMBASSY
PERFORMANCE. AMBASSADOR SAID HE WOUL LIKE TO THINK
MATTER OVER SINCE IT INVOLVED OBVIOUS DIFFICULTIES.

4. WITH REGARD TO TEAM'S DESIRE TO VISIT OTHER EMBASSIES,
PROBLEMS WILL ARISE NO MATTER HOW WE PLAY THIS ONE.
TO REFUSE GAO TEAM'S REQUEST WILL BE TO PUT EMBASSY IN
DEFENSIVE AND UNHELPFUL POSITION OF RESTRICTING
TEAM IN DISCUSSIONS WHICH IN A SENSE ARE GERMANE
TO ITS MISSION. ON OTHER HAND, TO FACILITATE
TEAM'S DISCUSSIONS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THESE
EMBASSIES WILL RESULT IN THEIR REPORTING TO HOME
FONOFFS, GREATLY INCREASE DANGER OF DISTORTED
PUBLICITY EMANATING FROM SANTIAGO AND OTHER POINTS, AND
PRODUCE POSSIBLY PREJUDICIAL SUBSTANTIVE RESULTS AS
EMOTIONALLY COMMITTED FOREIGN DIPLOMATS COMPARE
THEIR OWN COUNTRIES' STANCE REGARDING THE WHOLE MATRIX
OF REFUGEE AND ASYLEE POLICY WITH THAT OF USG.

5. ON BALANCE I FEEL IT IS PREFERABLE TO FACILITATE
SUCH CONTACTS, KEEPING THEM AS INFORMAL AND LOW-KEY
AS POSSIBLE. BEFORE INFORMING TEAM, HOWEVER, I WOULD
APPRECIATE RECEIVING FROM DEPT AN INDICATION AS TO
WHETHER A SIMILAR PROBLEM HAS EVER ARisen IN A PREVIOUS
GAO EXERCISE; IF SO, HOW IT WAS HANDLED; AND WHETHER
DEPT HAS OBJECTION TO PROPOSED COURSE OF ACTION. PLEASE
ADVISE PROMPTLY.

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PAGE 03 SANTIA 07195 252350Z

6. WE ARE INFORMING GOC INFORMALLY, AT MEDIUM LEVEL,
CONCERNING TEAM'S PRESENCE AND IITS MISSION.
POPPER

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